(c) the reasons for this gap; and

(d) the action taken to fill this gap through adequate supply of Kerosene for PDS?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI
SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) The Kerosene sold under Public Distribution System (PDS) is an allocated product. As per policy adopted by the Government of India the allocation of PDS kerosene to various States/ Union Territories was reduced every year beginning 2001-02 and till 2004-05, taking into account the number of LPG connections released in each of the States/Union Territories.

In view of the requests received from various State Governments for increasing the allocation, the Government of India have commissioned the first-ever detailed study of Kerosene demand in the country, through the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in December 2004. The final report of NCAER is expected by September 2005.

Pending the report of NCAER, and taking a view thereupon, allocations for the year 2005-06, have been maintained at the level of 2004-05, including additional allocations made during that year to meet urgent demand of PDS kerosene in States/Union Territories. The decision about rationalizing the allocation of PDS kerosene among States/Union Territories would be taken after examining the NCAER report.

Testing agency for diesel

1675. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRIMATI BIMBARAIKAR:
SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, of late PSU oil companies are losing out on diesel market share;

(b) whether the diesel sale by PSU oil companies fell by 9.5 per cent during the last quarter and if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether oil marketing agencies have revised the plan to increase marketing of diesel through new strategy; and

(d) whether there is any testing agency to which supplies from petroleum companies are subjected to in qualitative terms?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The Government have granted the rights for marketing of transportation fuels to new companies in terms of the Government resolution of 08.03.2002. These companies have started commissioning retail outlets and sales at these retail outlets are largely carved out of the sales of existing outlets of PSU Oil Marketing Companies. Hence, diesel retail sales have fallen by 5.9% for PSUs in the first quarter of 2005-06 (April-June 2005). In the de-regulated scenario, the Public Sector oil marketing companies are continuously reviewing their strategy in view of the market conditions.

(d) The names of laboratories which can be approached for testing the quality of petrol and diesel are listed in the MS/HSD Control Order.

Closure of LPG bottling trafficking plants

1676. SHRIMATI S.G INDIRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to recent LPG tanker operators strike, 13 bottling plants out of 16 were shut down in Tamil Nadu alone;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to resolve the issue between the LPG Tanker operators and PSU oil companies to ensure that such strikes are not not called frequently?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) At present, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are operating 18 bottling plants in Tamil Nadu. OMCs have reported that none of their plants was completely shut down owing to transporters' strike during the period between 8th July 2005 and 22nd July 2005. However, intermittent stoppage of bottling was experienced at the Chennai plant of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and